

O 010943Z APR 09
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO ALL DIPLOMATIC POSTS COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 031175

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: ACTION REQUEST: USG CANDIDACY FOR UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

REF: STATE 18282

SUMMARY

1. This is an urgent action request for all diplomatic posts. Note specific action requests for Wellington (paragraph 4), Tel Aviv (paragraph 5), and for friendly countries on the Council or that are running for a seat on the Council (paragraph 3). The United States has decided to seek election this year to the UN Human Rights Council (HRC). Elections are tentatively scheduled for May 12 in the UN General Assembly in New York. Department requests action addresses inform host governments of this decision as soon as possible following the March 31st public announcement and seek their support for the U.S. candidacy. This cable will be followed by a demarche request for posts to deliver that contains language for a diplomatic note and the contents of the U.S. human rights pledge. The text of the U.S. public announcement will be available after 16:00 EST March 31 at www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/pr/2009. End Summary.

OBJECTIVES FOR ALL POSTS

2. All Diplomatic Posts, as appropriate, should pursue the following objectives:

- Drawing on the points provided in paragraph 6, inform host government at the appropriate level that the United States is seeking election to the UN HRC this year; and
- Request host government's vote in favor of the United States in the May elections in New York.

ADDITIONAL POINTS FOR UNHRC MEMBER STATES, EU MEMBER STATES, OSLO, AND CANBERRA:

3. If posts believe it will be productive, they should deliver points contained in paragraph 6 and convey the following additional points:

- The United States hopes to work closely with host government to improve the HRC's record and the dynamics in Geneva.
- It is the U.S. view that by working closely together and by building bridges with countries from all regions, we can improve the HRC's effectiveness and help adapt its machinery to meet 21st century human rights challenges.
- If elected, we will need your assistance in standing firm on principle and presenting a united front on common issues of concern.

ADDITIONAL OBJECTIVE FOR TEL-AVIV ONLY:

4. Post should deliver points contained in paragraph 6,

and convey the following additional points:

-- We had hoped that the Human Rights Council would become the UN's premier human rights body. Thus far, it has not lived up to these hopes. Instead, the Council has been diverted from the cause of human rights by political distractions, particularly its obsessive focus on Israel. As a member of the Council, the United States will be in a better position to stand up against biased criticisms and politicized attacks.

-- Bringing about the serious reform that the Council needs will take time and engagement. We are committing to doing all we can to move the Council in a positive direction, including by engaging now to be best positioned to influence the 2011 Council review. We will be doing so with the interests of both the United States and Israel in mind.

TALKING POINTS:

15. Begin talking points:

-- The United States has decided to seek election to the Human Rights Council (HRC or Council) this year.

--The Administration is committed to principled diplomacy and to vigorous and effective multilateral engagement through international institutions, which can play a vital role in addressing the 21st century challenges we face. The promotion and protection of human rights is integral to U.S. interests. The United Nations should be a key forum for advancing human rights.

-- The Human Rights Council brings countries together around these important issues and has the potential to be an important forum for advancing human rights. We share the views of many that the Council's trajectory is of concern, and we believe that we must work together to make it a more effective forum for promoting and protecting human rights. Those who suffer from abuse and oppression around the world, as well as those who have dedicated their lives to advancing human rights, need the HRC to be balanced, credible, and effective.

-- The United States is running for a seat on the Council because of our commitment to human rights globally and in order to make the Council more effective in protecting and promoting human rights. We believe that as a fully-engaged member of the Council, working from within rather than sitting on the outside, we can do more to advance human rights and to improve a body that the President has identified as one of the most troubled parts of the UN system.

-- President Obama has embarked upon a "new era of engagement," but this is not engagement for engagement's sake; this Administration regards principled diplomacy as a pragmatic tool to realize distinct, realistic goals. We recognize that our work will be difficult; we know that creating a more effective Council will take time.

-- We will need the hard work and partnership of many countries to achieve this; but by seeking a seat at our first opportunity, we underscore our commitment to human rights and maximize our ability to effect the change we seek.

-- We hope to work with you and we ask for your support in the may election.

If Asked:

-- The United States has not asked, and will not ask any country to step aside.

REPORTING DEADLINE

¶6. Posts should deliver this demarche as soon as Possible. Department requests reporting on any substantive response to this demarche.

POINT OF CONTACT

¶7. Please contact Amy Ostermeier at (202) 647-3901, Gayatri Patel at (202) 647-3902 in IO/RHS or Lynn Sicade at (202) 647-2362 in DRL/MLGA with follow-up questions or requests for additional information.

CLINTON